

SECRET10 January 1972
10471-218

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Comments on Sam Adams' Comments on the Memorandum
Khmer Communist Combat Forces in Cambodia, November,
1971

1. Mr. Adams states that in the November paper we removed KC Guerrilla forces from the enemy order of battle -- we did no such thing. The November paper does not even address the total Khmer Communist order of battle. Indochina Order of Battle estimates consist of three categories of forces; Regular Combat Forces, Administrative Services and Guerrilla/militia forces. The November paper deals exclusively with the first component, Regular Combat Forces. The text clearly states that neither Administrative Services nor Guerrilla/militia are included in this paper about Combat Forces. The exclusion of the Guerrilla/militia, therefore, is a result of the definitions used in Indochina Order of Battle estimating, they are excluded from the Combat order of battle but not from the total OB.

2. We would make two principle observations concerning the KC Guerrillas. Because the revolution and insurgency in Cambodia are young we don't believe the Guerrillas are well developed. This judgment is based on the poor training and equipment status of the KC Combat Forces and the limited evidence on Guerrillas. Some Combat troops do not have arms; we are only certain that some Guerrillas in old base areas have arms. Secondly, as to numbers, we are not certain what emphasis has been put on Guerrilla organization and recruiting in the various areas. As a result we believe an overall OB statement ought to make a number of relevant observations concerning the Guerrillas, indicate that they could become more significant than they appear now to be, indicate that we have no way of reasonably estimating their number but that ought to be at least as numerous as the Combat forces given usual Communist practice in Indochina.

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3. Mr Adams demands that we throw out the low end of our estimated range because we added up only the documented units to get the low end of our range. We did not estimate the low end of the range that way. Rather, we took the identified Communist structure in Cambodia and assigned units to it. The confusion arises from a necessarily oversimplified one sentence description of our methodology which appeared as the introduction to our two page methodology section. The two page methodology section itself spells out in great detail exactly how the low end of the estimated range was derived. Had we used only the confirmed documented units as DIA does we would have arrived at a low end estimate of about 7,000 men (the mid-point of the DIA range of 5,000 - 10,000). Our estimate of 15,000 men is some 114% above that figure.

4. In para 10 Mr. Adams states that little allowance has been made for the growth of KC combat forces since June. He then proceeds to discuss the growth of VC/NVA forces in Cambodia not the KC. The growth of VC/NVA combat forces is the subject of another memorandum currently in process. It is not clear what this has to do with the KC force structure.

5. Mr. Adams states that the current estimate of the Communist infrastructure is out of date. This is quite correct. A Cambodia Information Center has been created in OER to look into this problem and to come up with a new estimate. This hasn't any real bearing on our estimate since our range assumes that the KC may be much better organized than we knew about at the time this paper was written.

6. Mr. Adams' conjectures that there are more than 19 subregions in Cambodia; this is indeed a possibility. It is also possible that there are fewer subregions or subregions without military forces. In areas remote from the possibility of Allied operations the Communists may not have felt it necessary to create significant military units.


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7. The number of districts under enemy control and with established infrastructures is currently under review by the OER Cambodia Information Center. When new estimates are available the district unit estimate will be revised. An incident in a friendly area does not necessarily mean that the enemy has established sufficient control over the population in that area to recruit, train, and equip a 130 man unit in that area. Our range is eminantly reasonable that between 53 and 90 of 131 districts have such units.

8. The existence of KC units directly subordinate to the KC regions had not been established at the time our November estimate was made. There is now evidence to indicate that some of the KC battalions formerly attached to VC/NVA Army force units have now been detached. These may be the units Mr. Adams is referring to. However, there is no evidence to indicate that the number of KC battalions both directly subordinate to the Military Regions and attached to VC/NVA main force units even approaches the 32 battalion equivalents in the November estimate, let alone exceeds it. If all these battalions exist, where are they? Why is it always necessary for the Communists to use VC/NVA main force units for major operations? In operation Chenla II the VC/NVA Ninth Division had to be called in to drive FANK from Route 6. The recent harrassment west of Phnom Penh was carried out by VC/NVA units subordinate to the Phouc Long Group. One would think that if a large KC combat force did in fact exist it would not have been necessary to divert VC/NVA units to conduct these operations.

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